



CONNECTICUT PHYSICAL THERAPY ASSOCIATION

A COMPONENT OF THE AMERICAN PHYSICAL THERAPY ASSOCIATION

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**Testimony of
James P. Leahy, CAE
Executive Director, CT Physical Therapy Association**

**In support of
HB 6722, AAC Concussions in Youth Athletics**

**Before the Joint Committee on Children
February 17 , 2015**

Chairperson Bartolomeo, Chairperson Urban, Members of the Committee on Children. My name is Jim Leahy and I am the Executive Director of the Connecticut Physical Therapy Association. I apologize for not being present today, but I am out of town at a funeral.

First, I would like to thank the Committee for their attention to this issue. As a high school soccer coach, I am faced with this issue on a daily basis each and every fall. There is no question that early education and training for coaches and parents will create safer play areas for our children. Physical therapists routinely provide advice and counsel to the parents of young children with similar injuries from sports and other related trauma. This bill could provide a roadmap to ensure that parents understand the steps to minimize the likely effects of concussions in youth athletes. I would like to provide one caution: any system which places significant additional burden or liability on youth coaches will create less safe play areas as it will drive parents off the practice fields and lead to larger practices which are inherently unsafe.

Additionally, the initial concussion legislation for high school sports and thus this bill have a major flaw as they exclude physical therapists from the list of health care professionals allowed to participate in return to play protocol in Connecticut school systems. This omission puts additional burden on parents and unfairly restricts access to a large set of qualified health professionals.

All physical therapists receive extensive education and training in the evaluation, treatment and management of neurological conditions and in practice address issues far more complex than those dealt with in return to sports concussion protocols. You will hear today from Mr. Chris DiPasquale, a member of the CT Physical Therapy Association and a Sports Clinical Specialist who can address this issue in person. We urge you to amend section 10-149c (2)c of the CT General Statutes to include physical therapists in the list of licensed health care professionals allowed to participate in this process.

Again, I thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I apologize for not being able to attend in person. If you need to reach me, please don't hesitate to reach out to me at 860-810-3298.